INSURANCE INSIGHTS



WHAT TRUCK BUYERS WISH FINANCE BROKERS KNEW ABOUT INSURANCE

By Chris Johnstone

Five lessons from the insurance side of the table that can help finance brokers close deals faster, create happier customers, and earn more repeat business.

Ask any commercial finance broker what the biggest obstacles to funding are and you'll probably hear the usual suspects: incomplete financials, title issues, credit exceptions, or slow documentation.

But there's another obstacle that quietly derails deals every day, and that is insurance.

Unlike credit, insurance is often left until the very end of the transaction. By the time problems surface, everyone is waiting: the customer, the dealer, the lender, and the broker.

After working with thousands of owner-operators and fleets, I've found that most insurance delays aren't caused by insurance at all; they're caused by expectations (or lack thereof).

Here are five things truck buyers wish every finance broker understood.

1. Buying Truck Insurance Isn't Like Buying Personal Auto Insurance
Many first-time buyers assume commercial truck insurance works like personal auto insurance. It doesn't.

Premiums depend on dozens of variables including:

- operating radius
- cargo
- years of CDL experience
- driving history
- authority status
- prior insurance
- equipment value

A customer expecting a 10-minute online quote can quickly become frustrated.

Takeaway
Set expectations early. Let customers know commercial insurance is underwriting and not just quoting.

2. Speed Matters More Than Price

This surprises many people.

Customers usually ask: "Who's cheapest?"

But what they're really thinking is: "How quickly can I get on the road?"

Every extra day waiting to haul freight costs income.

A broker who helps eliminate delays creates enormous value even if the insurance isn't the absolute lowest premium.

3. The Cheapest Policy Can Become the Most Expensive Mistake
Truck buyers often focus on monthly payment.

Experienced brokers know to think bigger.

Examples include:
- incorrect lienholder information
- no GAP coverage
- insufficient physical damage coverage
- missing endorsements
- deductibles the customer can't realistically afford
- coverage that doesn't match how the truck will actually be used

Fixing these issues after funding can be costly and frustrating.

The goal isn't simply finding insurance.

It's finding insurance that allows the customer to operate successfully.

4. Customers Don't Know What Information They'll Need
Insurance delays often happen because the customer wasn't prepared.

Examples:
- CDL information
- VIN details
- exact values
- lienholder requirements
- prior loss history
- existing insurance
- driver information
- DOT number

None of this is difficult.

But gathering it after underwriting starts can easily add days.

A simple checklist from the finance broker can prevent most of these delays.



5. Your Insurance Partner Reflects on You
From the customer's perspective, the insurance company isn't separate from the financing process.

It's all one experience.

If insurance is confusing...
The broker gets blamed.

If communication is poor...
The broker gets blamed.

If documents arrive late...
The broker gets blamed.

Customers remember how easy the transaction felt and not which company handled each piece.

Choosing partners who communicate well and move quickly enhances your own reputation.

Closing
The best finance professionals understand that their job isn't simply arranging financing.

It's removing friction.

Insurance may be the final step before funding, but it has an outsized impact on how customers remember the entire transaction.

When brokers understand the insurance process and help customers prepare for it, they don't just close deals faster. They create a smoother experience for every party involved, generating more referrals, repeat business, and stronger long-term relationships.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR
Chris Johnstone leads partner distribution at Ten Four Truck Insurance, where he develops strategic relationships across the equipment finance and trucking industries. His background spans commercial insurance underwriting, risk management, banking, and transportation, giving him a unique perspective on the intersection of insurance and equipment finance. Chris is an active member of AACFB, NEFA, UTA, and other industry organizations. He’s an avid golfer and upland hunter when not working.

